



## Brazil Research Guide

### ANCESTOR'S BIRTH LOCATION UNKNOWN

**FamilySearch Indexed Records:** Try searching first in indexed records. Try a variety of searches with ancestor's name, or with parents' names, or just by parents' surnames AND using the option to limit locality by the country of Brazil/and or the state in Brazil.

**Contact Family Members:** If you do not have even a minimal of information and have no idea where and when to look, try to contact family members who might have that information, e.g. older aunts, uncles, grandparents, etc.

### ANCESTOR'S BIRTH LOCATION AND NAMES OF PARENTS, SPOUSE OR CHILDREN ARE KNOWN

Civil Records in Brazil began in 1850. Church Records began in the 1600s in Sao Paulo. However, in most places records do not begin until the late 1870s. Be sure to peruse both Catholic Church and civil records for information on your ancestors.

**FamilySearch Indexed Records:** Try searching first in indexed records as explained above.

**FamilySearch Browsable Images:** If no results from initial search you will have to browse images for the locality. On the **Search** page, click the **South American** portion of the map then select **Brazil** from the list of countries. Select a record collection from **Image-Only Historical Records** and browse the collection page-by-page for your ancestor.

**FamilySearch Catalog:** Under **Search** on the home page select **Catalog**. Type **Brazil** and click **Search**. A list of available records will appear. Your search can be localized by selecting **Places within Brazil** at the top and then choosing the exact locality where your ancestor lived.

**FamilySearch Community:** You can get immediate research and handwriting help from a community of researchers through the FamilySearch Communities. Go to <http://community.familysearch.org/> and click **Groups**. Search for **Pesquisa Genealógica** to find the group for Portuguese genealogical research. Although many of the posts on this group are in Portuguese, the members will respond to posts in English. On this page, you can post research questions and upload documents to get translation help.

### RESEARCH STRATEGIES

**Who to Search For:** If you know the name of the spouse and/or some of their children, begin with a marriage search (if they married in Brazil and you know the place). Or begin with a search for the baptism record of a child if you have an approximate birth date and place.

**FamilySearch Wiki:** Translation, handwriting help, and descriptions of specific record collections can be found on the FamilySearch Wiki. Under Search on the home page selection Research Wiki. Type **Brazil** and hit **Enter**. The information on this page will lead you to helpful topics such as **Languages** (under Brazil Background), which includes a list of genealogical terms in Portuguese and a letter-writing guide if you need to request documents from Brazil. The section **Brazil Emigration and Immigration** may help you find where your ancestors in Brazil originated. At the bottom of that page there is a list of websites to help you in this quest.

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## SURNAME PECULIARITIES

In Portuguese culture the females of the family often took on the mother's name for their surname while the males took on the surname of the father. There are exceptions to this – if one family name was more prominent in society or had greater wealth, then the family might choose to use that surname regardless of whether it belonged to the father or the mother.

## FINDING A LOCALITY

For help locating a place in Brazil, try the following sources:

- Google
- **Brazil Gazetteers** link on the FamilySearch **Wiki**

## ONLINE RESOURCES

**BrazilGenWeb Project:** [www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~brawgw/](http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~brawgw/)

**Online Gazetteer:** [www.fallingrain.com/world/BR/](http://www.fallingrain.com/world/BR/)

**Brazil Cemetery Records:** [www.interment.net/brazil/index.htm](http://www.interment.net/brazil/index.htm)

**German Migration to Brazil:** [www.genealogienetz.de/reg/WELT/brasil.html](http://www.genealogienetz.de/reg/WELT/brasil.html)

Also check the Wiki page **Brazil Websites**.